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WikiLeaks web page showing American embassy messages

## SECRET MESSAGES EMBARRASS THE USA

On 28th November WikiLeaks displayed 220 documents on its website. The documents are mostly **confidential** messages, or cables, sent by diplomats to their headquarters in the USA, from American **embassies** around the world.

WikiLeaks also sent the cables to five well-known newspapers – *The New York Times*, in the USA; *The Guardian*, in the UK; *Le Monde*, in France; *Der Spiegel*, in Germany; and *El Pais*, in Spain. These newspapers, and many others all around the world, then began writing articles about what was said in the private messages.

WikiLeaks claims it has been given around 250,000 American diplomatic cables. It says it plans to publish all of them, via the five newspapers and its website, over the next few months.

WikiLeaks is an organisation that was set up four years ago by Julian Assange. Mr Assange, who is 39 years old, is from

Australia. Some people describe him as a computer hacker. He says he set up WikiLeaks so people who have access to documents that governments or large companies want to hide can post them on the internet. When secret, or confidential, information appears in newspapers or on a website, it is called a leak. People who take the risk of making secret documents public are often described as 'leakers' or 'whistleblowers'.

A 23-year-old American soldier called Bradley Manning is believed to be the whistleblower who passed the diplomatic cables to WikiLeaks. He was working in Iraq, where he is thought to have managed to copy the data from a military computer onto a CD. The soldier has also been accused of passing tens of thousands of secret American military documents to WikiLeaks about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is now being

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held under arrest at a military base in the USA.

The American government discovered WikiLeaks had copies of the diplomatic cables a few days before the stories began to appear in the newspapers. It immediately contacted many countries to warn them what was about to happen. This was because the leaked cables contain details of private meetings between important people and American diplomats working in their countries.



*Julian Assange*

The cables contain conversations held in places such as China, South Korea, Pakistan, Russia, the Middle East, South America, Europe, and Africa.

Although most of the information in the leaked cables is not really secret, a lot of what's in them is embarrassing for the USA. For instance, some of the cables criticised European leaders including David Cameron, the prime minister of the UK; Nicolas Sarkozy, the president of France; Silvio Berlusconi, the prime minister of Italy; and Angela Merkel, the chancellor of Germany. The president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, is described as 'crazy'.

Most of the first cables released were from countries in the Middle East. The messages seem to show many of them distrust the leaders of Iran. The USA and several European countries have accused Iran of developing nuclear weapons, although it denies this. The messages show that several Arab countries, such as Saudi

Arabia, have been urging the USA to bomb Iran and its nuclear facilities. Yet these Arab countries have never said these things in public.

On 29th November Hillary Clinton, a senior American politician, apologised to the world for the leak of the diplomatic cables. She insisted they had been stolen. Mrs Clinton also said the leaks will cause many problems and even endanger the lives of a few people mentioned in them.

Some have said the leak is a good thing. They think it's important for people to know what the world's leaders and senior politicians really think about other countries, especially when they say different things in public. Others disagree. They believe the leaks may make countries distrust the USA and each other, and therefore they will be less willing to have any private meetings or talks.

The American government is now trying to work out if Mr Assange, WikiLeaks's boss, has broken any laws. As he is Australian, some Australian judges have been asked if Mr Assange can be arrested for what he has done.

Mr Assange is now thought to be living at a secret address in the UK. On 1st December the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) put Mr Assange on its 'most wanted' list for a crime he is accused of committing in Sweden. The Swedish police say he attacked two women. Mr Assange insists the women and the Swedish authorities have deliberately made the story up so they can arrest him.

Mr Assange claims a whistleblower in a large American bank has recently sent WikiLeaks a new set of secret documents. These, he says, will also be displayed on the WikiLeaks website in the near future. ■

## 'SQUIDWORM' DISCOVERED

Oceanographers – scientists who study life in the oceans – say they have discovered a new species. The 'squidworm', as it has been called, was found at a depth of 3,000 metres (9,840 feet) under the Celebes Sea, between Indonesia and the Philippines.

The unusual-looking creature has eight tentacles that come from its head. Two are used for feeding while the others are a form of gills through which the worm breathes. Each tentacle is as long as the worm's whole body – up to about nine centimetres (3.5 inches). The worm also has six pairs of feathery 'whiskers' on its head. Along its body the worm has 'paddles' that propel it through the water. The young are transparent, while the adult worms are brown in colour.

The worms feed on tiny organisms called plankton and what's known as 'marine snow'. This is bits and pieces of organisms that live closer to the surface of the sea. As the bits break off the organisms, they gradually sink down to where the squidworms live.



*Squidworm*

The squidworm was first discovered during an undersea exploration in 2007. Since then scientists have been studying it and learning about its behaviour. They also compared the animal to other similar species to make sure it is definitely

something new that has not been discovered before.

The reason the discovery is important, say scientists, is the squid-worm could be a 'missing link' between species that live only on the seabed and those that live in the sunnier waters closer to the surface. The unusual features on the worm's body seem to be adaptations to the dark deep waters close to the seabed. This interests the scientists because it seems the worm has evolved to live in this 'in-between' space.

What is most surprising to the oceanographers is that the squid-worm seems to be quite common to the area in which it was found. Several individual squidworms were spotted on different undersea dives. The scientists are therefore amazed the species had not been found before. Although experts say the Earth has numerous undiscovered life forms, most of these are believed to be very tiny (such as bacteria) and not large enough to be easily seen swimming in the ocean. ■

## WHY MAMMALS RULE THE EARTH

Palaeontologists – scientists who study animal and plant fossils – say they are now sure the extinction of the dinosaurs is the reason mammals are the dominant species on the Earth today.

The scientists came to their conclusion after doing a two-year study of the mammal fossil record. The 'fossil record' is the name given to all the fossils kept in museums and other collections around the world.

Dinosaurs lived on the Earth between an estimated 220 and 65 million years ago. The very first mammals are thought to have evolved around 200 million years ago.

## NEWSCAST

**TINY POLICE OFFICER** — A Japanese police force has welcomed its newest officer – a tiny longhaired dog named Momo. The Chihuahua passed a test to become a member of search-and-rescue teams. These police teams operate when there has been a disaster such as an earthquake. Search and rescue dogs go into damaged and collapsed buildings to look for survivors. The officers in the police force say Momo should be able to fit into much smaller spaces among earthquake-damaged buildings than the usual larger search-and-rescue dogs. Many people have now nicknamed Momo 'the world's smallest police dog'.

During the time of the dinosaurs most mammals were very small – about the same size as mice and rats.

The dinosaurs died out 65 million years ago. Most scientists now think a large asteroid striking the Earth caused their extinction. A huge impact like this would have caused earthquakes, wildfires, huge tidal waves, and a change in the Earth's climate that lasted for many years. Yet, whatever wiped out the dinosaurs did not kill all the mammals. Scientists think one reason for this may have been that some lived in burrows deep underground.

Mammals' teeth are often well preserved. And from fossilised teeth it's possible for palaeontologists to work out the size of an animal. The fossil record shows that after the dinosaurs died out, mammals began to evolve into much bigger creatures quite quickly. The scientists say it took only about 25 million years for mammals to evolve into

huge animals, sometimes known as 'megafauna'. In terms of evolution, 25 million years is a short period of time.

Many of the mammals that evolved were much bigger than any of those that live on the Earth today, including elephants. One example is the now-extinct indricotherium. This animal, which grew to a height of 5.5 metres (18 feet) and weighed 17 tonnes, was a herbivore, or plant-eater. Indricotheriums lived in what is now Europe and Asia around 34 million years ago. Another was the elephant-like deinotherium, also called the 'hoe tusker', because of the shape of its tusks. It lived in Africa, Europe and Asia between 8.5 and 2.7 million years ago.

The scientists think mammals were able to evolve into larger creatures so quickly because the dinosaurs disappeared. This meant they no longer had any competition for living space or food. The palaeontologists believe one of the reasons some mammals became so big was so they could travel over long distances for food. Also, in colder climates, larger mammals are able to keep their body temperature warmer than smaller ones can.

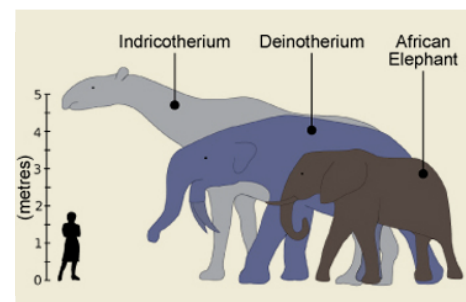


Chart comparing the size of ancient mammals with a modern-day elephant and human (IMPPS)

The scientists are not sure why these larger mammals died out. But, they say, it could have had something to do with climate change and competition for food. ■



## A PLANET FROM ANOTHER GALAXY

by Anna Grayson

A team of astronomers using a large telescope in Chile has discovered a new planet that was formed far away in another galaxy.

Unlike stars, planets do not emit their own light, so they do not 'shine'. This makes them very difficult for us to see. But planets always go round, or orbit, stars. Our Sun is a star, and the Earth – together with Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune – orbit it. This group of planets orbiting our Sun is called the Solar System.

The Sun is just one of between 200 billion and 400 billion stars in our galaxy – the Milky Way. Twenty years ago everyone thought the only planets in the whole Universe were those in our Solar System. However, in the 1990s astronomers started discovering other planets orbiting distant stars. Planets that are not part of our Solar System are known as exoplanets or extrasolar planets. Now nearly 500 exoplanets have been found orbiting other stars in the Milky Way.

When planets orbit stars, they sometimes block or disturb the light coming from that star. It's by recording the disturbance, or 'wobble', of a distant star's light that astronomers can work out if the star has an exoplanet, or several exoplanets, orbiting it.

The newly discovered exoplanet has been given a 'code number' – HIP 13044 b – rather than a name. Its sun, which is about 2,000 light years from the Earth, is called HIP 13044. A light year is the distance light travels in one year, or about 9.5 trillion kilometres (six trillion miles).

Yet HIP 13044 b is very different from other recently discovered exoplanets. Although it and its star are now in the Milky Way, they have an exciting past – both originally come from a different part of the Universe.

HIP 13044 and its orbiting exoplanet are in a region called the Helmi stream. This group of stars once belonged to another smaller galaxy

separate from the Milky Way. Between six and nine billion years ago the bigger Milky Way swallowed up this little galaxy. That may sound like something from science fiction, but astronomers are certain this happened. They call it 'galactic cannibalism'.

Astronomers believe there are more than 100 billion galaxies in the Universe. So the reason astronomers are excited by the discovery of HIP 13044 b is that it suggests exoplanets also exist in other galaxies in the Universe, not just the Milky Way.

A spokesperson working for the Royal Astronomical Society in London, in the UK, said: 'This means that planets probably exist in all the galaxies in the Universe, and that's a lot of planets. With that many planets there must be a reasonable chance of there being another planet like ours with life on it.'

However, HIP 13044 b is almost certainly not the home of any life. Similar to Jupiter in our Solar System, it is largely made of gas. Also the exoplanet's star is probably at least ten billion years old, and nearing the end of its life. The

star is at a stage known as a red giant. Although it was almost certainly very similar to our Sun at one time, it has now expanded to a gigantic size. It's possible it has swallowed up some exoplanets that were nearer to it as it has got bigger and bigger. HIP 13044 is now much cooler than our Sun, and glows red rather than white.

Astronomers think our Sun is about 4.5 billion years old. They predict that in about five billion years, it too will turn into a red giant. When it does it will expand and swallow up the inner planets of our Solar System. So, although HIP 13044 and HIP 13044 b were formed many light years away, in a different part of the Universe, they are giving astronomers a glimpse of what will eventually happen to our own little planet, the Earth.



Artist's impression of HIP 13044 and HIP 13044 b (ESO)

## NATO MEETING

Leaders of the 28 member countries of NATO held a summit, or meeting, in Lisbon, the capital of Portugal, on 19th and 20th November. Although Russia is not a member of NATO its president, Dmitry Medvedev, was also invited.



NATO is an alliance. Its name stands for North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO's current Secretary-General, or leader, is Anders Fogh Rasmussen, a former prime minister of Denmark.

The alliance was set up after the end of the Second World War (1939 – 1945). At this time the USA and many countries in Western Europe had become enemies of the Russian-led Soviet Union. Since then several other countries have joined NATO. Some, such as Hungary and Estonia, were even once part of the Soviet Union. These countries became independent after the

Soviet Union collapsed and broke up in 1990.

NATO members agree to send military forces to help if another member country is attacked. Since 2003 troops from many NATO countries have been fighting a war in Afghanistan against a political and tribal group called the Taliban.

The war in Afghanistan began in 2001 after the USA led an invasion of the country. It did this because a militant group called al-Qaeda had attacked the USA. At the time al-Qaeda had its training bases in Afghanistan and was supported by the Taliban. In 2003 other NATO member countries agreed to send troops to Afghanistan to help the USA and the new Afghan government.

In the recent past, led by the USA, NATO has been planning to set up a 'missile shield' in several Eastern European countries that are NATO members. The USA says the shield is designed to protect Europe, the USA, and Canada from any long-range missiles fired from countries in the Middle East, such as Iran. Yet plans for the shield upset Russia because it was to be so close to the Russian border.

During the meeting President Medvedev and the leaders of the NATO countries made an agreement about the shield. Now it will be set up with help from Russia, and be

designed to protect Russia as well as the other countries.

On the second day of the summit Hamid Karzai, the president of Afghanistan, was invited to attend. The war in his country was discussed. A plan was agreed that means all NATO troops involved in the fighting will leave Afghanistan by the end of 2014. However, NATO leaders said they will continue to help with the training of the Afghan army and police force after this date. ■

## NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA ATTACKS

On 23rd November North and South Korea began firing artillery shells and rockets at each other. The bombardment lasted for just over one hour. Some experts said this 'military engagement' is the most serious incident to have happened since the end of the Korean War in 1953.

North and South Korea have a troubled history. They used to be one country before being taken over by Japan in 1910. After Japan was defeated at the end of the Second World War in 1945, the Americans occupied the south of the country and the Russians the northern part. Each organised a different system of government. The USA introduced democratic elections in the South and Russia set up a communist government in the North.

In 1950 the Korean War started when the North invaded the South. The United Nations (UN) – using mostly American troops – supported the South. The Chinese helped the North. A truce was agreed in 1953. Today's border between the countries is known as the De-Militarized Zone (DMZ). It follows the line where the two

### NATO MEMBER COUNTRIES

Albania	Estonia	Latvia	Slovakia
Belgium	France	Lithuania	Slovenia
Bulgaria	Germany	Luxembourg	Spain
Canada	Greece	Norway	The Netherlands
Croatia	Hungary	Poland	Turkey
Czech Republic	Iceland	Portugal	United Kingdom
Denmark	Italy	Romania	USA

armies faced each other when the truce was declared.

At the end of the war the South still occupied several islands close to North Korea in the Yellow Sea. The South and the UN claims the DMZ border follows a line out to sea that it calls the Northern Limit Line (NLL). The North disagrees. It says the line of the sea border should be to the south of the islands and the NLL. It calls this the Military Demarcation Line.



On 23rd November troops from South Korea held a training exercise. They began firing shells into the sea from large guns on an island called Yeongpyeong. This island is close to both the NLL and North Korea. The North complained that it was not a training exercise, but a threat. It then began firing at the island.

Fighter jets were sent by the South to attack the North Korean guns. The South Korean guns on the island also started firing back at the North. Most of the 1,700 people who live on Yeongpyeong were evacuated by fishing boats. Two civilians and two soldiers on the island were killed.

When they heard the news many South Koreans were worried another war was about to break out. Most blamed North Korea for what had happened.

Eight months ago a South Korean navy ship was sunk close to the NLL. Almost half of the 100 sailors

on board were drowned. Most people believe a North Korean submarine sank the ship. Yet North Korea denies this.

North Korea is a secretive country, but it has admitted that it has developed nuclear weapons. Many people worry that these will be used to threaten other countries in the region.

China is one of the only countries that frequently talks with North Korea. A few days after the Yeongpyeong Island bombardment China sent officials to North and South Korea. It said this was to discuss how to make sure these types of incidents do not happen again.

The USA, which supports South Korea, sent one of its aircraft carriers to the Yellow Sea. It explained that it had done this so it could take part in a training exercise with South Korean navy ships. ■

## WINDOWS AT 25

The 25th anniversary of the sale of the first Windows computer operating system was on 20th November. The Microsoft Company created the operating system, which it named Windows 1.0.

An operating system is software made up of different computer programmes. It manages the computer's hardware and allows the computer user to run different programmes and applications.

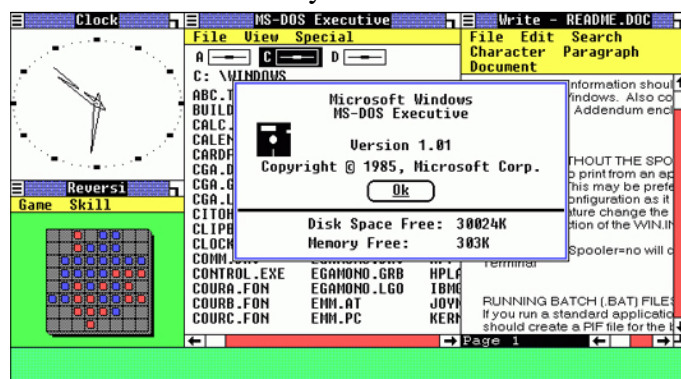
Microsoft is the world's largest software company. Experts say today about 90% of the world's computers have Microsoft software

installed on them. This means over one billion people use the company's software. Microsoft makes many millions of dollars both from its Windows operating system and from a product called Office, which includes Word, Powerpoint, Excel and other applications.

Bill Gates and Paul Allen founded Microsoft in 1975. Today Mr Gates is one of the richest people in the world. He has partly retired from his job, but still acts as Microsoft's chairman.

Twenty-five years ago Windows 1.0 took over from Microsoft's MS-DOS, or MicroSoft-Disk Operating System. This system was based on typed commands, and not graphics or icons. So Windows 1.0 was the first Microsoft operating system to use graphics. As it could be used on computers made by lots of different companies, it soon became very popular.

Windows 1.0 included a calculator, control panel, notepad, calendar and clock. However, open windows on the screen could not overlap. Instead they had to appear tiled, or side-by-side or below or above each



Windows 1.0 screenshot

other. Only dialogue boxes could appear on top of open windows.

Windows 1.0 was sold for two years before the Windows 2.0 operating system was produced in 1987. This upgraded system had several improvements, including overlapping



windows. The company's latest operating system, Windows 7, was launched last October. ■

## 400-YEAR-OLD MURDER MYSTERY

In November, Czech and Danish historians opened a tomb in a church in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic. The tomb they wanted to investigate belongs to Tycho Brahe, a famous astronomer from Denmark. He was buried in the church, in 1601, just over 400 years ago.



*Tycho Brahe*

Some historians suspect the astronomer died because he was poisoned. The team was granted special permission to take samples from Tycho Brahe's body to try to find out how and why he died.

Tycho Brahe was born in 1546 in an area of Denmark that is now part of Sweden. He was interested in taking measurements of the movements of the planets. He also discovered a supernova – a star that has exploded. Brahe was known as 'the man with the golden nose'. This is because, during a duel after a disagreement with another man, part of his nose was cut off. Later he wore a false nose, which he had made himself out of gold and silver.

In 1599 Tycho Brahe had an argument with the Danish king. The king disliked the astronomer because he had become close to the king's mother. Tycho Brahe then went to live in Prague, where he was welcomed by Emperor Rudolph the Second. At the time the emperor ruled the Holy Roman Empire, which included most of what is now central Europe.

In the 1990s a test was done on a few hairs from Tycho Brahe's beard. These had been taken from his tomb when it was opened many years ago. The hairs were found to contain a large amount of mercury.

Another clue to Brahe's death, say historians, is a recently discovered diary written by a distant cousin of his. Eric Brahe's diary shows that in 1601 he travelled to Prague. He met up with Tycho Brahe and the two men became good friends. But in the same year Tycho died at the age of 54.

Some people think the Danish king sent Eric Brahe to poison his distant cousin with mercury. Others believe the famous astronomer may have been poisoned by Johannes Kepler. As a young man Kepler worked for Tycho Brahe in Prague. Later he too became a famous astronomer. He was the first person to work out exactly how the planets travel around the Sun. Those who suspect Kepler say he murdered Tycho Brahe to get hold of his astronomical measurements. These were very valuable, as they had taken Brahe many years to record.

The leader of the historians that opened Tycho Brahe's tomb says they want to find out more about his life and how he died. But proving the astronomer was poisoned is likely to be difficult. This is because, in those days, it was not unusual for people

to take small amounts of mercury because they believed it cured certain illnesses. So if 'the man with the golden nose' had done this, it might explain why mercury was found in the hairs of his beard. ■

## NEW ZEALAND MINE DISASTER

On 19th November an explosion in a coal mine in New Zealand trapped 29 men working underground. Rescue teams were not able to enter the Pike River mine because of dangerous gasses. Several more underground explosions happened in the following days. After the second explosion, on 24th November, the police chief in charge of the rescue teams said he believed all the men had been killed.

Just after the first explosion one man, who had been working 2.25 kilometres (1.4 miles) from the entrance of the mine, called the mine's control centre on a telephone line. He said he had seen a large flash. He put on special emergency breathing equipment and began to walk out.

## NewsCAST

**DOUGH THIEF** — A thief in New York City, in the USA, made a big mistake when he planned to steal money from the owners of a pizza restaurant. The man watched the owners close the restaurant for the night and put their bags into their vehicle. He followed them home and is reported to have attacked them and fired a gun when they got out of the car. He managed to steal one of the bags. But when the police caught the thief, the bag turned out to contain not the money from that day's sales, but pizza dough.

On his way he found another man lying on the ground, and helped him to get to the entrance. The two men were taken to hospital but were not badly injured. But another 29 men – 24 from New Zealand, two from the UK, two from Australia, and one from South Africa – were still inside in the mine.

When people heard the news many thought about the recent mine rescue in Chile. There 33 men were all safely brought to the surface after being trapped underground for 69 days. But the two mines are very different.

The Chilean mine is a gold and copper mine dug into hard rock. The men were trapped 700 metres (2,300 feet) underground because parts of the mine had collapsed. In New Zealand the mine passages follow softer **seams** of coal. In coalmines there is a chance that dangerous gasses, such as methane, can build up. The explosion happened about 120 metres (394 feet) underground and it did not cause any of the mine to collapse.



Entrance to the Pike River mine

Relatives of the missing men travelled to the entrance of the mine. Some were angry that no rescue attempts were being made. But the people in charge said the mine was full of poisonous gasses. They insisted it was too **hazardous** for rescue teams to enter. They informed everyone that the 29 men had emergency breathing equipment which

should give them enough oxygen to reach a safe part of the mine.

Two special robots were used to go into the mine. One broke down, but the other showed a picture of a miner's helmet with its light still on.

A hole was drilled down from the surface to the place where it was thought the men might be. Rescuers hoped there would be fresh air in this part of the mine. But gas testing equipment showed it was full of methane and carbon monoxide. A camera was lowered into the hole, but there was no sign of the men.

Some experts think a crack in the wall of the mine allowed natural gas to enter. This mixed with methane gas and exploded. Special monitoring equipment in the mine is meant to sound an alarm if there is a build-up of dangerous gasses. Yet this did not seem to have worked.

John Key, the prime minister of New Zealand, says the government will set up an inquiry to find out exactly what happened in the mine. ■

## BAIL-OUT FOR IRELAND

A special European Union (EU) meeting was held in Brussels, the capital of Belgium, on 28th November. Finance ministers from EU member countries attended. During the meeting it was agreed that Ireland, an EU member, would be offered as much as €85 billion (£72 billion) in extra loans. This money, which some people describe as a 'bail-out', will be used to try to solve many of Ireland's money problems.

Ireland is a member of the Eurozone. This means it's one of 16 EU member countries, out of a total of 27, that use the euro as their currency.

Other EU countries and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will provide the money for the bail-out. The IMF is based in the USA. It has 186 member countries. One of the IMF's jobs is to give financial help and advice to its members. It will also agree to lend money to them if they cannot borrow it from anywhere else. Most countries try to avoid borrowing money from the IMF because in return they have to obey very strict IMF rules.



Ireland's prime minister, Brian Cowan

Last year Greece, another member of the Eurozone, had to accept a similar bail-out. Financial experts predict that some EU countries have borrowed too much money and will, in future, find it difficult to pay it all back. They have nicknamed this group of countries 'PIGS' – Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain.

However, Ireland's problems are different from those that affect Greece. In Greece it was the government that was spending too much money. Yet in Ireland the problem has been the banks.

In the past banks in Ireland lent large amounts of money to companies to build new offices and houses. To do this they too had to borrow large amounts of money. Yet due to the money problems that have affected many countries the banks have been unable to pay back the loans. This meant the banks were in danger of going out



of business. If this were to happen, people who keep their money in accounts at those banks would lose all their savings.

To avoid this the Irish government has decided to guarantee the banks' debts. This means if the banks cannot repay the money they have borrowed, the government will. Some people think this is a mistake, as it has now been discovered the banks owe much more than was originally thought. All the larger banks have now been taken over by the government.

Brian Cowan, the Taoiseach (pronounced t-schock), or prime minister, announced that the people of Ireland will have to pay higher taxes. And many people who work for the government will lose their jobs. These measures, he says, are necessary to help the country pay back all the money it has had to borrow to save its banks.

On 27th November, the day before the bail-out plan was agreed, around 50,000 people took part in a demonstration in Dublin, the capital city. They are angry with their government. The demonstrators claim the Irish people are being forced to pay for the banks' problems. They say it's the government's fault, as it should have stopped the banks from borrowing and lending so much money in the past. ■

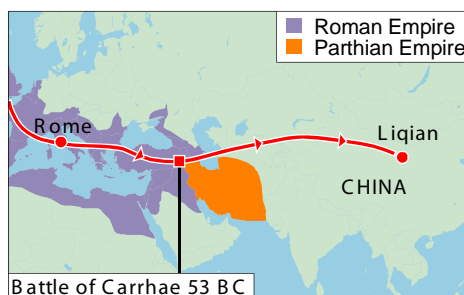
## ROMANS IN CHINA?

Scientists in China have announced the results of DNA tests on people who live in a Chinese village called Liqian. They claim the tests show many are descended from people who originally came from Europe.

Some believe the tests prove many of the villagers are descended

from a group of Roman soldiers. This 'lost legion' disappeared after a battle fought in what is now Turkey, in 53 BC.

Most Chinese people have black hair and dark eyes. Yet in the area around Liqian, in north west China, an unusually high number have pale eyes like Europeans. Some even have fair hair. These traits are mixed with the usual Chinese facial features and shapes. So they have some Chinese features and some European ones. Records show that people with these unusual looks have lived in Liqian for many hundreds of years.



In the 1950s Homer Dubs, a professor of Chinese History at Oxford University, in the UK, first suggested there might be a link between Liqian and the 'lost Roman legion'. He wrote several articles about it. Yet at the time Chinese officials were not interested in the professor's ideas.

In 53 BC Marcus Crassus, a Roman general, led an army against the Parthians. They came from the area that is now Iran. The two armies met at the Battle of Carrhae in 53 BC. The Parthians won and Crassus was killed. So the Roman Empire didn't spread any further east.

A story, or legend, says that 145 soldiers escaped after the battle and travelled east towards China. According to the legend the soldiers were captured by the Chinese 17 years later and made to fight for their army.

Some ancient Chinese written records describe a group of foreign soldiers that used a 'fish scale formation'. Some think this is a description of how Roman soldiers held their shields closely together to protect themselves during battles.

If the story is true, it's possible some of the soldiers eventually made their home in Liqian, and are the ancestors of the people who live there today.

Other historians say the DNA tests do not prove the Liqian villagers are descended from the lost legion. The village is not far from an old trading route called the Silk Road. These historians say the villagers could therefore be descended from Europeans who travelled to this part of China much later. They say to prove the lost legion eventually made Liqian their home, items such as Roman coins or weapons would need to be found in the area. ■

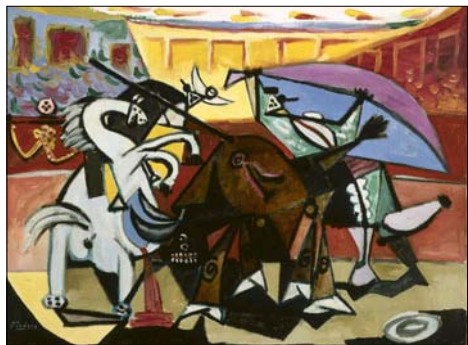
## NewsCast

**MAPLE LEAF WARS** — Recently officials from the Guinness Book of World Records declared that a nine-year-old boy in Canada had discovered the world's biggest maple leaf. His leaf measures 34 centimetres (13.3 inches) across and 39 centimetres (15.3 inches) from top to bottom. Yet now people in a different part of Canada claim their leaves are bigger. One family says it found a leaf that measures 52 centimetres (20.5 inches) in both directions. And another woman says although her leaf only measures just over 51 centimetres (20 inches) across, from its tip to the end of its stem it is a huge 74 centimetres (29.1 inches).



## PICASSO ARTWORKS DISCOVERED

A retired electrician in France claims he owns hundreds of works by Pablo Picasso, one of the world's most famous artists. The electrician says the artworks, which include paintings, sketches, and notebooks, were given to him by the painter before his death in 1973.



*The Bullfight by Pablo Picasso*

Picasso was born in Spain in 1881. Although he didn't make much money from his paintings in his younger years he later became very wealthy. To many, Picasso is the 20th century's most famous painter. Today his pictures sell for many millions of dollars.

Picasso painted in a style known as Cubism, which began in the early 1900s. In Cubist works of art, objects, including people, are painted as if they have been broken up into pieces. Each piece is painted as if it is seen from a different angle from the others. The final picture looks as if all the pieces have been roughly put back together again.

Last September, the electrician, Pierre Le Guennec, went to the offices of Claude Picasso – Picasso's son – in Paris, the capital of France. Claude Picasso looks after many of his father's paintings. Mr Le Guennec opened a suitcase containing over 170 drawings and paintings.

At first Claude Picasso thought they were fakes. But then he noticed

they were all numbered with a special system that Mr Picasso knew his father used, so he realised they were real.

Most of the paintings and drawings are works from Picasso's younger years, between 1900 and 1932. Many have not been seen before. Others were known to exist but were thought to have been lost or destroyed a long time ago.

Mr Le Guennec claimed that in the years before he died Picasso had asked him to fit burglar alarms in his many houses in France. Mr Le Guennec says Picasso's wife gave him the paintings and drawings after he had installed the alarms.

Claude Picasso was suspicious. He called the police, who searched Mr Le Guennec's house. There the police found 271 Picasso paintings, sketches and drawings. Mr Le Guennec was arrested, but later released.

Some people think Mr Le Guennec must have stolen the artworks when he was fitting the burglar alarms, and that Picasso, who was an old man by this time, didn't notice the theft. They also wondered why Mr Le Guennec waited 40 years before admitting he had the paintings. It's now likely a court will have to decide on the rightful owners.

Art experts estimate that the Picasso artworks found at Mr Le Guennec's house are worth at least €9 million (£50 million). ■

## STAMPEDE IN CAMBODIA

In the early evening of 22nd November hundreds of people in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, were killed in a stampede.

Crowds of people were celebrating the last day of the country's annual Water Festival. This three-day

festival marks the start of the fishing season and the end of the monsoon, or rainy season. It is held at the time of the full Moon.

As part of the celebrations, boat races are held on the Tonlé Sap. This is a large lake connected to the River Mekong. The lake is unusual, as the water flowing between it and the river changes direction twice a year. During Cambodia's dry season, from November to May, water flows from the lake into the river. Yet when the heavy rains begin in June the water in the river flows into the lake. The Water Festival therefore also marks the time when water begins flowing from the lake back into the river.



*Buddhist monks praying on the bridge the day after the stampede in Phnom Penh*

Thousands of people had gone to a place called Diamond Island to watch the boat races. To do this they had to cross over a suspension bridge open only to pedestrians.

People who saw the stampede say a crush of people suddenly started on the bridge. There were about 7,000 people on it at the time. Many began pushing from both ends. A suspension bridge is designed to sway from side to side, but some people on the bridge started to panic when it did so, as they thought it was about to collapse. People rushed to get off the crowded bridge and

## NewsCAST

**GIANT TOOTHACHE** — A group of dentists in India has successfully treated its most unusual – and biggest – patient. Devidasan, a bull elephant, had to have a tusk repaired. The tusk had a deep, 50-centimetre (19.7 inch) crack in it. The dentists said it was important to repair the tusk so dirt did not get inside and cause an infection. They used 47 tubes of the same substance used to fill cracks in humans' teeth. They say they don't know how long the repair will last but hope it will be many years. Now Devidasan has gone back to his job of taking part in Hindu religious parades.

some fell down and were trampled. Others jumped into the water and drowned. Several were electrocuted as they grabbed electrical cables on the sides of the bridge.

Emergency workers rushed to the area. Many injured people were taken to hospitals in Phnom Penh. Soon after the stampede Hun Sen, Cambodia's prime minister, spoke on live television. At first he said around 200 people had been killed. Later the number rose to 347, with over twice as many badly injured.

The day after the incident about 500 Buddhist monks went to the bridge to pray for those who had died. The prime minister announced a day of mourning on 25th November to remember those killed in the stampede. Many schools were closed. Children wearing their school uniforms carried flowers as they took part in special ceremonies.

Government officials say they will now make special safety plans to make sure nothing similar happens in the future. ■

## FIRST ELECTION IN TONGA

Tonga's first fully democratic election took place on 25th November. Now the country's ruling monarch, George Tupou the Fifth, will no longer be in control of the Pacific island country.

Tonga is an archipelago – or group of islands – in the South Pacific Ocean. Until 1970, when it became a fully independent country, Tonga was what is known as a British Protectorate within the British Empire. The country is made up of over 150 islands and has a population of just over 100,000.

George Tupou the Fifth became king in 2006 after his father died. Traditionally the king has always appointed, or chosen, people to advise him, including a prime minister. Recently a few people have been elected but they had no power to make important decisions. The king therefore ran the country. This type of government is known as an 'absolute monarchy'. Hundreds of years ago many countries were ruled in this way.

Tonga was one of the last remaining absolute monarchies in the world. Now it has held democratic elections, it has become a constitutional monarchy. This means the king is the head of state but has little power. Important decisions are made by a parliament elected by the people.

Four years ago, just after George Tupou the Fifth's father died, there were riots in the country. Many buildings in Nuku'alofa, the capital city, were destroyed. Government buildings, offices, shops, hotels, and the country's only bank were burnt. The king and his advisers asked Australia and New Zealand for assistance. They sent 150 soldiers and

policemen to help. The rioters said they were protesting for democracy. So the king made changes that led to the recent elections.

The Friendly Islands Democracy Party won 12 of the 17 elected seats. Akilisi Pohiva leads this party. Tonga was called the 'Friendly Islands' by the British explorer Captain James Cook when he landed on the islands in 1773.

The other five elected seats were won by independent candidates, who are not members of any political party. The new parliament also includes nine seats for nobles – high-ranking tribal leaders who have inherited their status because of their family. Tonga's 33 hereditary nobles choose from among themselves who will hold these nine seats.



*George Tupou the Fifth, king of Tonga*

Instead of being appointed by the king the new prime minister will, for the first time, be chosen by the 17 members of parliament who were elected by the people of Tonga. Most people expect Mr Pohiva to become prime minister.

Early on 25th November the king made a speech saying the election was 'the greatest and most historic day for our kingdom'. Although he will no longer have anything to do with choosing prime ministers or advisors, the king will still appoint judges. This is so the legal system is kept separate from parliament and from the elected politicians. ■



## PROTECTING POLAR BEARS

On 24th November officials declared an area within Alaska, one of the USA's 50 states, will become a 'critical habitat' for polar bears.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is an organisation that collects information about animals and plants all over the world. The IUCN works out if any of these are endangered. It puts each species into one of eight classes. These range from 'least concern' (not at risk) to 'extinct' (no individuals left). The IUCN classes polar bears as 'vulnerable' (serious risk of extinction).

Polar bears live within the Arctic Circle in the northern parts of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Norway, and Russia. The bears spend most of their lives on sea ice, which is their natural habitat, and not much time

on land. Polar bears eat seals, so they need to be close to the edges of the ice fields and to the sea, where they can hunt them.

In the warmer summer months, sea ice around the edges of the ice fields melt. Scientists say more and more ice is now melting each summer. In the winter months, ice forms again and makes a solid 'shelf'. Yet in recent years, the warmer winter temperatures have meant there isn't as much time for sea ice to form during the winter before it starts melting again in the summer.

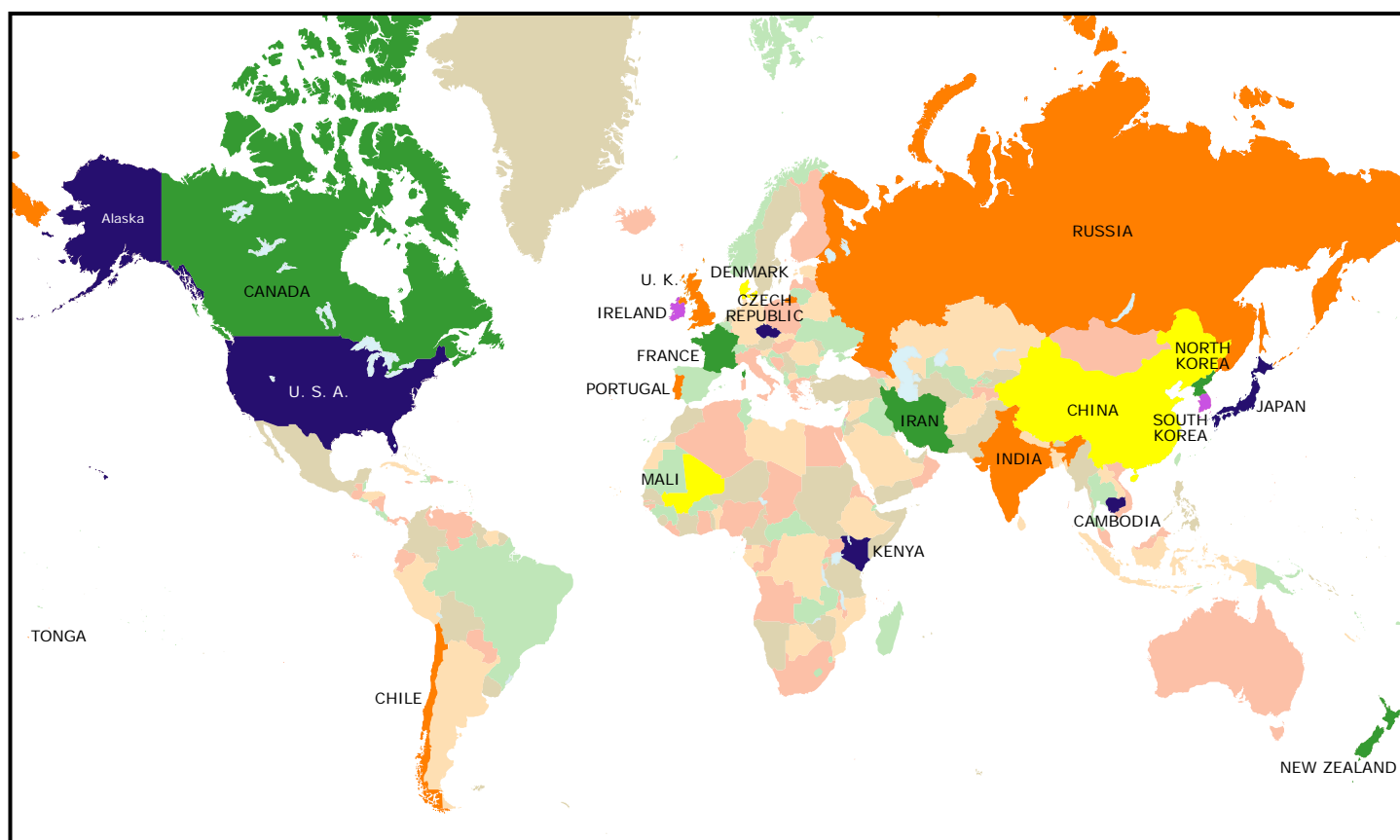
Most scientists agree that temperatures in many parts of the world, including the Arctic, are rising faster than they normally would. This warming, they claim, is mainly caused by human activity. These scientists blame the use of fossil fuels – oil, gas and coal – which release extra carbon dioxide when burned.

Increasing amounts of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere, they say, is acting like a greenhouse and causing average world temperatures to increase. This temperature rise, or global warming, means the polar bears' natural sea ice habitat is getting smaller, or shrinking.



*Polar bear*

The officials in Alaska said polar bears will be protected within an area of more than 484,000 square



This map shows countries to which news stories refer in this issue. Visit [www.newsademic.com](http://www.newsademic.com) for more detailed world maps.

kilometres (187,000 square miles). However, the announcement does not mean there will be no human activity. Instead companies or groups of people such as those involved in shipping, tourism or the search for fossil fuels, that want to operate in this area can only do so if they prove they will not harm the polar bears.

Some government officials in Alaska have criticised the announcement. They say the main threat to polar bears in Alaska and the rest of the Arctic is not this type of human activity. The announcement, these people complain, doesn't say or do anything about the polar bears' biggest problems – global warming and the decreasing amount of sea ice. ■

## UNESCO'S INTANGIBLE HERITAGES

Members of UNESCO met in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, on 16th November. The main reason for the meeting was to decide on what should be added to their list of '[Intangible](#) Cultural Heritages'.



*Flamenco dancers*

UNESCO, which has its headquarters in Paris, the capital of France, is part of the United Nations. Its name stands for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

One of UNESCO's jobs is to select places around the world that it calls World Heritage Sites.

UNESCO believes these places, which can be ancient or modern buildings, cities, monuments, mountains, lakes, and forests, should be preserved. This is because they are important parts of the world's cultural, social, and natural history.



*World Heritage logo*

Countries can ask UNESCO to list places as a World Heritage Site. If UNESCO agrees, the site is given 'World Heritage' [status](#). Then UNESCO helps the country to preserve and look after the heritage site by providing money. Examples of World Heritage sites include the Pyramids of Giza, in Egypt; the Coliseum, in Rome; the Statue of Liberty, in New York; the Great Barrier Reef, off the coast of Australia; and the Sundarbans National Park in India. The country with the most World Heritage Sites is Italy, with 45.

As well as World Heritage Sites UNESCO also grants 'Intangible Cultural Heritage' status. 'Intangible' describes something that is not a physical object – it is something you cannot touch. UNESCO says although you cannot visit them in the same way as you can visit its heritage sites, intangible heritages are important to people's culture and traditions and must be preserved. Examples of 'experiences' that have been given Intangible Cultural Heritage status by UNESCO are types of music, dance, cooking, singing, and storytelling.

At the meeting in Kenya it was agreed that 51 new experiences, from 29 different countries, would be added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

One was flamenco. This is a traditional type of music and dance from Spain. Flamenco is a dance that involves fast, rhythmic foot-tapping to the music of a guitar and singers. Other dances already on the list include the tango, from Argentina, and the mask dance from Bhutan, which is accompanied by drumming.

Another new addition to the list was 'the French meal'. It doesn't mean a particular food from France was added to the list. Instead, UNESCO decided that the experience of eating dinner and how it is done in France is important. It says the traditional French meal is a custom with lots of rituals that make it special.

Officials in France, who suggested UNESCO make the French meal an Intangible Heritage, were delighted it had been added to the list.

## NEWSCAST

**AIRPORT PROTEST** — More than 100 passengers sat on a plane in a French airport for over four hours. It wasn't because their flight was delayed, though. The passengers were protesting because their plane had been diverted to an airport far away from the one at which they were supposed to land. The passengers were so angry they refused to get off the plane. Airline officials said other passengers whose planes had been diverted had accepted the offer of going to their destination by coach. They also said it is common to divert planes when there is fog, which means they can't land safely.

They believe it will make people in France more aware of the ways they eat. They also said it will help people educate children about traditions and customs surrounding the cooking and sharing of food.

The list of Intangible Cultural Heritages was first created in 2003. Now there are more than 200 'experiences' from all around the world on UNESCO's list. ■

## AFRICAN CITIES REPORT

A United Nations (UN) organisation has written a report called the State of African Cities 2010. UN Habitat produced the report, which was released on 23rd November in Bamako, the capital of Mali.

UN Habitat's full name is the United Nations Human Settlements Programme. The organisation's job is to help governments to make sure everyone in the world has a home in which to live. It also promotes the advantages of 'environmentally sustainable towns and cities' and what it calls 'social sustainability'.

When something is described as 'sustainable' it means it can be used for a long time without using up or destroying natural resources. So an environmentally sustainable town or city means one that can grow and in which people can live without damaging the surrounding environment. Social sustainability means having enough of the right services to look after everyone who lives in the town or city. Examples of these services include proper housing, doctors, sanitation, water supply, schools, and transport.

UN Habitat's report says towns and cities within the African continent are now some of the fastest growing in the world. More and

more people are moving from rural areas to live in towns and cities. The report says the number of people living in African cities will have tripled by 2050. UN Habitat estimates 60% of the 1.23 billion people who live in Africa will be living in cities within the next 40 years. It warns that this sudden increase in the number of people living in towns and cities – the urban population – could be both unsustainable and a danger to people's health.

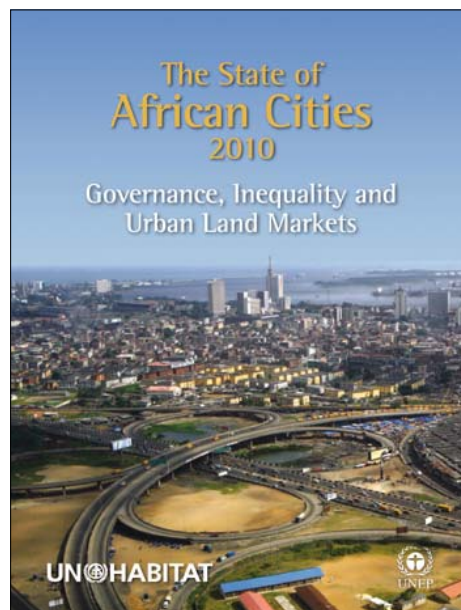
Like many cities in other continents, a lot of African cities have areas known as slums, or shantytowns. These are places where people set up temporary houses, which are often made of pieces of wood and sheets of plastic. They do this because they don't have enough money to rent or buy a home.

Often, UN Habitat says, people who live in slums have homes in the countryside, but they travel to the cities to get work. UN Habitat warns this means many African governments don't really know how many people are living in their cities.

The organisation gives an example of a slum area called Kibera, in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. Official government records say 400,000 people live in the Kibera shantytown. Yet UN Habitat claims the real figure is somewhere between 500,000 and one million. This can be a big problem when the government is deciding how much

to spend on what people need in places such as Kibera. As they do not know how many people live there, the official calculations will be wrong.

UN Habitat estimates 24 million people live in slums in Africa. It says governments have done a lot over the last ten years to improve the living conditions for these people. The report also says it expects the Nigerian city of Lagos to become Africa's most populated city by 2015, when it's predicted to be home to 12.4 million people. ■



Cover of UN Habitat's report

## POLLUTION HOLIDAY

People in Tehran, the capital of Iran, were given a special day off on 24th November. The government declared the day would be a national holiday, as the air in the city was so polluted.



Pollution in Tehran

Offices, factories and schools were closed for the day. Officials said they made their decision because they had been monitoring, or checking, the city's level of



pollution and it was expected to be very high on that day. People were told to stay inside as much as possible to avoid breathing in the polluted air.

Tehran Province, in which the city is located, is Iran's most urban, or built-up area. Around 12 million people live in the province. Of these more than 8.5 million people live in the city of Tehran.

The province is almost completely surrounded by mountains and hills. This, say officials, is one reason the city's pollution is so bad. Pollution and smoke from factories and cars, often called smog, becomes 'trapped' over Tehran, especially in the autumn. The mountains block winds and rain that would otherwise blow or wash the smog away.

When pollution levels are expected to be high in Tehran officials sometimes restrict the number of vehicles that can be driven in the city. Public transport, such as busses and taxis, is allowed. Yet people who drive their own cars into Tehran are only permitted to do so on certain days. This depends on their car's number plate. Car owners whose number plates have an odd number are allowed to drive on one day, while those with even numbers may drive the next day, and so on. Many people complain when these number plate restrictions are announced.

The city's badly polluted air causes many illnesses. These include asthma, allergies, and other [respiratory](#) infections and breathing problems. Doctors say the number of people suffering from these illnesses has been increasing in recent years.

Many people in Iran work for six days a week, with Friday as the day off, or weekend. The pollution holiday on Wednesday 24th November

meant these people had a three-day break, as Thursday 25th November was a religious holiday. ■

## TIGER MEETING

Leaders from 13 countries attended a meeting, or summit, in St Petersburg, in Russia, to discuss wild tigers. The meeting, which took place between 21st and 24th November, was called the International Tiger Conservation Forum.



It's thought that around 100 years ago there were roughly 100,000 tigers in the world. Yet today it's estimated only 3,200 are left. The Caspian, South China, Javan, and Bali are different species of tiger that have already died out. Many people worry that if nothing is done it will not be long before all tigers become extinct.

Vladimir Putin, the prime minister of Russia, hosted the tiger forum. The 13 countries that attended were those that are still home to different types of wild tigers. They include Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, Vietnam, and Russia. The country with the most wild tigers is India, with around 1,400. In countries such as China it's estimated there are only between 40 and 50 left.

Experts say the main reasons for the decline in the numbers of wild tigers are the loss of habitat and poaching. Much of the forestland where they live has been cleared to

make way for farmland and buildings. In all the countries that attended the St Petersburg meeting, killing tigers is against the law. Illegally killing tigers, or any other animals, for their body parts or skins is called poaching.

Yet some people, especially in countries such as China and Vietnam, are still prepared to pay large sums of money for the body parts of tigers. Most of these are used to make ancient traditional medicines, which some people believe improves a person's health. Tiger skins can also be sold for as much as US\$25,000 (£15,000).

The governments of the 13 countries that attended the tiger summit have agreed to a programme called the Global Tiger Recovery Plan. This was written by an organisation called the Global Tiger [Initiative](#) (GTI). The GTI was set up two years ago. Its recovery plan brings together some of the separate projects that several of the 13 countries already have for protecting tigers.



Bengal tiger

Organisations such as the World Bank and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) have now promised to provide large sums of money to help pay for the GTI's recovery plan. For instance, the World Bank has agreed to donate US\$100 million (£64 million) to help pay for tiger conservation work in three of the poorer countries where tigers live – Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh.

Much of the money donated will be used to set up protected areas of forestland where tigers can safely live and breed. However, some people think it will be very difficult to stop illegal poaching in some of the countries, especially as tiger body parts can be sold for so much money.

The 13 countries have agreed to meet more frequently. They will report on what they have been doing to preserve and increase their tiger populations and decide on how other donations of money are to be spent.

According to the 12-year cycle of animals used in the Chinese calendar, 2010 is the Year of the Tiger. The GTI claims if its Global Tiger Recovery Plan is followed correctly the world's tiger population will have doubled by 2022 – the next Year of the Tiger. ■

## SHAKESPEARE'S NEW HOME

A theatre that has taken more than three years to rebuild was opened in Stratford-upon-Avon, in the UK, on 24th November. Called the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, it is used for performing plays written by the town's most famous historical resident, William Shakespeare.



*The Royal Shakespeare Theatre's new stage*

William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) was born in Stratford-upon-Avon. He became a successful actor and playwright and lived for much of his life in London where

there were large theatres. His acting group, or company, was very popular and performed plays for Queen Elizabeth the First (1558 – 1603). In 1599 Shakespeare and some of his friends had their own theatre built in London, called the Globe.



*William Shakespeare*

The Globe Theatre was a circular building with a courtyard in the middle. Some of the audience stood in the courtyard to watch the plays. Wealthier people paid to have seats in the three tiers, or levels, of balconies in the circular building. A thatched roof covered the seats, but the courtyard was open-air. The theatre was destroyed by fire in 1613, and a replacement building was closed down in 1642. A modern copy, or reconstruction, of the Globe was built in 1997, close to where the original theatre used to be. It is now used for performances of Shakespeare's plays.

The Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon was originally built at the beginning of the 1930s. At the time many new cinemas were being built and the theatre had a similar design. So parts of the auditorium, where the audience sits, were a long way from the stage. People in the audience and actors often complained that it was very difficult for people at the back to hear what was being said on the stage.

The new theatre's auditorium is different. The stage, called a thrust stage, sticks out into the middle of the audience. The seats are 'stacked' in balconies above each other. So everyone in the audience will be much nearer to the actors and be able to see and hear them more clearly.

The company that designed the rebuilding work says it wanted to make the experience of watching Shakespeare's plays similar to the way in which his contemporaries would have watched them at the Globe four hundred years ago. The new design means the theatre has 350 fewer seats than it used to have.

The rebuilding work, which kept the old outside walls of the theatre, cost £113 million (US\$176 million).

Sir Ian Richardson was a very famous actor who performed in many plays at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. He died in 2007. His wife and his son, who is also a Shakespearean actor, arranged for Sir Ian's ashes to be buried under the front of the stage, within the new building's foundations. His son said his father 'will now be in the front row for every performance and just where he would like to be, centre stage'. ■

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**Editor:** Amber Thody

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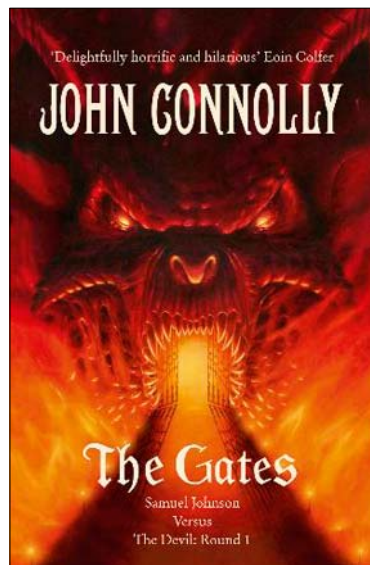
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## B O O K R E V I E W

### HAVE YOU READ ...?



sucked into the portal and come back out filled with evil demons, the worst thing is what they hear the demons say – that they must prepare, because in four days they plan to open the gates of hell completely...

That's when Samuel and Boswell do the smart thing – run away as fast as they can!

This book has a great start, and the story doesn't just focus on Samuel. In fact, it's more like two stories with a very humorous narrator (I'll get back to the narrator in a bit). The second story revolves around a group of scientists in Switzerland working at the Large Hadron Collider at CERN. It seems that during one of their experiments – where they smash small particles together at close to the speed of light – something went a little... wrong. And it went wrong at exactly the same moment as Samuel observed the portal opening.

But what is the thing that draws the stories of Samuel and a group of physicists in Switzerland together? They are both trying to shut that portal between our world and hell!

I like how Samuel is faced with challenges and decides on the best solutions. For example, who could he tell who would believe him? Samuel just starts ticking people off a list. He tries to speak to his Mum of course, but she has other priorities, like feeding him cereal and getting him dressed for school. The local vicar, or priest, at church isn't even certain if there is an actual hell, and in the end Samuel decides the only people to

turn to aren't adults at all, but his friends. Luckily for Samuel, he has always been an inquisitive, or curious, kid and finding solutions to things is in his nature.

Eleven-year old Samuel Johnson and his dog Boswell aren't having a good day. While they are out for a walk, they happen upon a small group of people who are just at that moment opening a small [portal](#) into hell. And although Boswell doesn't understand it as well as Samuel does, neither of them is happy about what they see. In fact they are understandably terrified!

Aside from watching those four people get

turn to aren't adults at all, but his friends. Luckily for Samuel, he has always been an inquisitive, or curious, kid and finding solutions to things is in his nature.

Remember I mentioned that narrator? This book has a unique style in that the author has comments, or footnotes, at the bottom of many pages. These add depth and detail to the story. These comments are very funny and they usually take the form of good advice or explanations... But sometimes the comments are bad advice and the joke is on you for not thinking it through first! For instance, I wouldn't follow the advice about telling your mother you are going to eat 'dinner' while you twitch your fingers in the air to imitate the quotation marks...

The story takes on a strong combative twist as Samuel is assaulted in the night by a bed monster - from which he makes a very clever escape. Later Samuel even manages to flush another demon down the toilet! Things come to a head on Halloween, during the third and final night.

This book is full of humorous surprises on almost every page. It's a fantasy-fiction book best suited for readers aged 11 and up, or for anyone who appreciates a humorous ghost story. If you like books by Terry Pratchett, Eoin Colfer, or Douglas Adams, you'll recognise and appreciate the style of comic writing in *The Gates*. And if you're not into particle physics and quantum theory...well, *The Gates* might just make you realise why you should be.

The sequel to *The Gates*, called *Hell's Bells*, will be released in May.

*The Gates* by John Connolly. Hodder Paperbacks.

Reviewed by **Chris Tarn**

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If you do, look for the 'recommended book' link in your subscriber menu when you log in to our website.

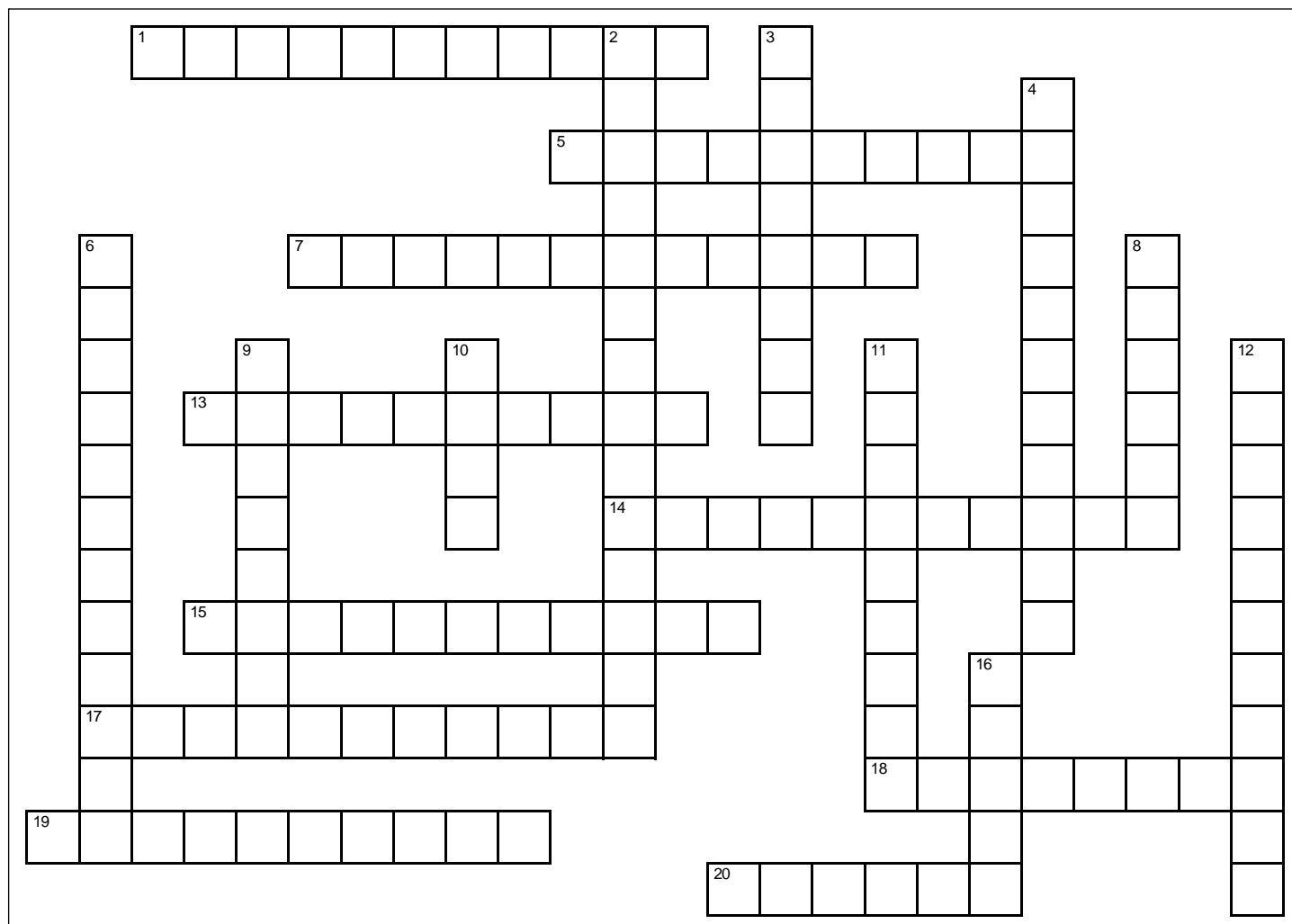
Complete the form and tell us why you enjoyed the book. If we review your choice, we'll mention your name and include some of your comments.



# GLOSSARY

## PRIZE COMPETITION

**INSTRUCTIONS:** ① Complete the crossword. The answers are highlighted in orange in the news stories. There are 25 words highlighted and you need 20 of them to complete the crossword. ② Once you have solved the crossword find the 20 words in the word search on the next page ➡



### Across

- 1 Noun** An interruption or intrusion  
**5 Noun** The power or will to get something started  
**7 Adjective** Describes private information meant to be shared only with certain people  
**13 Noun** An opinion that has been reached after thinking about different possibilities or arguments  
**14 Noun (Plural)** Characteristics that have developed to help organisms to survive in the places where they live or grow  
**15 Noun** Eating human flesh, or an animal eating its own kind  
**17 Noun (Plural)** Areas in which groups of families or people live together  
**18 Noun** A sudden, rushed movement of a large number of people or animals, usually in panic  
**19 Adjective** Describes something that isn't a physical thing and that cannot be touched  
**20 Noun** The amount of admiration, respect or importance given to a person, group or object

### Down

- 2 Noun (Plural)** People of nearly the same age as another person  
**3 Adjective** Urgently needed or absolutely necessary  
**4 Adjective** Related to breathing  
**6 Noun** Somebody authorised to speak on behalf of another person, company or organisation  
**8 Noun (Plural)** The features or characteristics of a person  
**9 Adjective** Stronger or more important than anything else of the same type  
**10 Noun** A one-to-one fight using pistols or swords, used in the past to settle disagreements  
**11 Noun (Plural)** Buildings where ambassadors and other diplomats work  
**12 Noun** An attack using large guns or missiles  
**16 Noun (Plural)** Underground layers of coal or ore

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					3		8	
1							5	7
5						6		2
	7	8		6			3	
3			7					
		2		9				1